

Introduction

The image on the cover of this volume comes from a stock photo¹ tagged² as body art, which can be briefly described as the application of paints to the body used as a canvas for creating new captured images or forms of art. The photographer depicts two hands painting each other's surface. This immediately brings to mind the paradoxical circuit of Maurits Cornelis Escher's *Drawing Hands* from 1948, which is reminiscent of a strange loop as described by Douglas Hofstadter in *I am a Strange Loop* (2007). The selection of this photo is not purely accidental, however it is a matter of utilizing algorithmic serendipity by the editors. It has been chosen as a representation of the current "strange loops" manifest within the modern cultural industry, which includes databases of stock photos as raw material for re-manipulation and sale. Moreover, it is also a representation of what the ancient Greeks have described as *pharmakon* (anything applied to the body, especially if it altered consciousness and was tied with behavioral rituals). The *pharmakon* is not simply a matter of poison or remedy—as many following in the footsteps of Derrida have claimed. Given the "magical" heritage of practices of care, and the word-play between *circuits* and *loops*, the stock photo of two hands, each painting the other's skin, serves as a metaphor for *pharmaka*. It represents an organology of bodies like hands, which are not merely naked or bare. They are *in the process* of cov-

¹ The photographer's description, with original mis-spellings: "Adulthood and living together concept. How people take each others features of character and change their behaviour when they live with somebody. Painting and modern art. Paiting tools". Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/adulthood-living-together-concept-how-people-1167867316>.

² Other tags: „drawing; hand; two; action; art; artist; artistic; arts; body; body art; brush; character; coloring; concept; cooperation; craft; creation; creative; decorative; design; detail; drawing dream; expression; fairytale; features; female; friendship; hobby; holding; human; interaction; life story; male; modern; paintbrush; painter; painting; pattern; process; red; relationships; silver; skill; skin; symbiosis; symbols; together; tool; white; work." Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/adulthood-living-together-concept-how-people-1167867316>.

ering each other's sense functions with a layer of paint, which modifies how *we feel touch* as well as how others perceive *my hands*—and by extension through body art—the gestures and poses captured by modern photography, image manipulation software, and a place for organizing and redistributing retained instances of aesthetic sensitivity. In addition, both hands arranged in yin-yang fashion also use the *artificial organ* of the paintbrush stained with the colors of the Other. This represents an interdependence between hands and tools (technologies of paintbrushes and paint production as well as techniques of painting). This image also represents the interdependence between behavior, art, and aesthetics.

Behavioral aesthetics is a new domain within the philosophy of art. As it is with novelty, this implies a lack of established methods and theories, at least within academic circles focused on aesthetics. Yet it is not entirely unthought, since the practices of marketing are a commercial form of exploiting societies, bodies and consciousnesses for the pursuit of profit. Since art can be conceived as a pharmakon, this means that a critical philosophical theory is missing within the domains of marketing, which have become careless and destructive of every aspect and dimension of life and existence. However, such practices of carelessness or other examples like the commodification of user behavior by social media raise a need for a critical reflection and diffraction of aesthetics through a behavioral critique, including its ethics and politics. This volume gathers together various approaches to aesthetics through such a behavioral lens.

We have asked Anaïs Nony to prepare a short preface to this volume in order to open up venues to further question the relationship between behavior and aesthetics. In her preface, titled *Racism and Culture in the Age of Techno-Aesthetic Supremacy*, she directs our attention to current events and the role of technology in disseminating biases, such as racism.

The first article by Daniel Ross titled *Mind Snatchers of the Anthropocene* refers to what has been described by geologists as the Anthropocene epoch in terms of the apocalyptic event of climate change triggering mass extinction and intensifying atmospheric violence. This also refers to the dire technological influence and grave significance for all traces archived by the biosphere's natural fossil records. Ross's article addresses how to re-envision this nightmare, which requires a revolutionary geopolitics of the sensible passing through the works of Bernard Stiegler, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Peter Szendy, and a conversion of the noetic gaze akin to the aesthetic event of discovering a bistable percept.

Next, Debora Pazetto Ferreira applies a Flusserian perspective to various images created by Google Deep Dream in *Artificial Dreams: Contemporary Intersections. Between Art and Technology* and raises difficult political and theoretical problems tied to the workings of art and the dissolving boundaries between art, science and technology.

The following article by David Charles Wright-Carr addresses aesthetic experience and visual language naturalistically via the paradigm of embodied cognition as a critique of calculation-based cognitive science. The article *Embodied Cognitive Science, Aesthetics, and the Study of Visual Language* presents key terminology and the problem of sign-making within symbolic environments.

A continuation of the naturalistic approach to the philosophy of art signaled by the previous article can be found in Francis Mechner's article *A Naturalistic and Behavioral Theory of Aesthetics*. This approach probably comes closest to what researchers in related fields would imagine by the tag "behavioral aesthetics." Here aesthetics is epistemologically problematized through reaction.

Next, the article *Towards Behavioral Aesthetics* by Adrian Mróz presents new paths for moving the field of aesthetics into a new *behavioral* paradigm of art, and the resulting *aesthetic* workings, while drawing from ideas arising from *new materialism* and a performative reconceptualization of whatever is considered to be artistic.

Finally, this volume is concluded with two extracts from Jean Galard's *La beauté du geste*, which is an attempt to reimagine human behavior through aesthetics. His writing concerns the primacy of analyzing aesthetics through the metaphoric usage of everyday behavior reconsidered as a fine art. He shows foundations for judging behavior itself as beautiful or ugly, which is something that can be encountered in many Platonic dialogues, yet somehow lost in modern understanding of behavior in terms of neutrality or at best an ethical and political problem and not an aesthetic one, as if gestures are not applicable to axiological investigation and the philosophy of art.

Thus, we hope that this volume will paint the eyes and thoughts of readers with the key-strokes that have the potential to transform the philosophical understanding and common knowledge of art and aesthetics itself. These articles show in one way or another how behavioral aesthetics is at once a domain of *techne* (technics, technology, science and the arts); it is a domain of desire (from its infinitude and incalculability in aiming towards

aesthetic judgment to its calculated manipulation by cultural and algorithmic industries); and that of know-how, or *savoir-faire*. In gesturing towards the inextricability of art and behavior, what is implicitly and explicitly raised is the question of the functions and dysfunctions of aesthetics in the contemporary age, an age in which the biosphere is fundamentally threatened by a technosphere whose consumerist macroeconomic orientation is driven precisely by the power of digital and audiovisual technologies to circumvent the nexus between behavior and aesthetics.

Daniel Ross & Adrian Mróz

“The Polish Journal of Aesthetics” and Adrian Mróz would like to thank Les Impressions Nouvelles for granting the journal the right to reprint the two translated excerpts of *La beauté du geste* included in this volume. We would also like to thank Jean Galard for his agreement as well.